

## ELISHA PERKINS AND HIS METALLIC TRACTORS

WILLIAM SNOW MILLER

Hocus! pocus! up and down!  
Draw the white right from the crown!  
Hocus! pocus! at a loss!  
Draw the brazen rod across!  
Hocus! pocus! down and up!  
Draw them both from foot to top!

Wooden nutmegs and counterfeit money are not the only frauds that have had their origin in Connecticut. To the members of the medical profession Perkins' Metallic Tractors are of the most interest.

Dr. Joseph Perkins, father of Elisha, graduated at Yale College in 1727, and immediately began the practice of medicine in his native town, Norwich, Connecticut. Thacher says: "He possessed brilliant talents, and was distinguished for scientific pursuits, and for undissembled piety, patriotism and benevolence. -He continued to practice extensively till near the close of life, and died in 1794, aged 90 years."

His son, Dr. Elisha Perkins, the subject of the following sketch, was born in Newent Society in the town of Norwich, Connecticut, January 16, 1741. He received his medical training under his father, and served for a time as his assistant. He then removed to Plainfield, Connecticut, where he built up an extensive practice.

Thacher, in his eulogistic sketch of Elisha Perkins, says: "He possessed by nature uncommon endowments, both bodily and mental. In his person he was six feet high and of remarkable symmetry. His ability to perform active professional business was extraordinary; he frequently rode sixty miles a day, and generally on horseback, and this without the aid of artificial stimulants, never making use of ardent spirits."

Evidently he was interested in educational affairs, for he established and contributed generously to an academy at Plainfield which is still in existence. The academy soon attracted pupils from the surrounding towns and, as sufficient boarding accommodations were wanting, he took many into his own home, "so that at times his

family numbered fifty." His home also served as a private hospital for the treatment of invalids. Among the names of those treated are the Honorable James Burrill, at one time a member of Congress and grandfather of George William Curtiss, and the Honorable Calvin Goddard, also a member of Congress. Although he is not listed in Toner's *Medical Men of the Revolution*, in the more complete list in Duncan's *Medical Men in the American Revolution* his name appears with the rank of Surgeon. The stage seemed set for a successful career; but it was not to be fulfilled. He discovered what eventually were termed *Tractors*, and instead of finishing his career as a practitioner of high character, he finished as a quack.

It is interesting to follow the train of circumstances which led to his discovery of the tractors. While performing a surgical operation he noted the contraction of a muscle whenever the point of a metallic instrument came in contact with it. This led him to try whether other materials, like wood, would occasion the same contraction of the muscle; the result was in every instance negative. He, therefore, decided that it was the contact with metal that caused the contraction of the muscle. About the same time he found that in some cases when a knife was used to separate the gum from a tooth, previous to extraction, the pain was relieved. He also observed that temporary easement of pain was occasioned by applying metallic instruments to inflamed and painful tumors before making an incision. This led him to experiment with instruments made of various metals in order to find which, either singularly or in combination, gave the best result; he finally discovered a combination which would serve his purpose. From this he made two instruments, and the results of their application exceeded his ardent expectations.

He discovered that by drawing over the parts affected in particular directions certain instruments which he formed from metallic substances into certain shapes, he could remove rheumatism, gouty affections, pleurisies, inflammations in the eyes, erysipelas, and tetters; violent spasmodic convulsions, as epileptic fits; the lockjaw; the pain and swelling attending contusions; inflammatory tumours; the violent pains occasioned by a recent sprain; the painful effects of a burn or scald; pain in the head, teeth, ears, breast, side, back and limbs; and indeed most kinds of painful topical affections, which came under his care and observation. The instruments producing these effects are termed *Tractors*.

The application of the tractors was, after their introduction into Denmark, termed Perkinism by the Danish physicians, and "to perkinize" was the term used to designate the method of treatment. The tractors, as finally made by Perkins, consisted of two pieces of metal about three inches long, and usually described as being made of iron and brass, though their composition is described by their patentee, at a later date, as more complicated. Each tractor was half round on one side, while the other was flat and usually had the name "Perkins Patent Tractors" stamped upon it; they were rounded at one end and drawn out into a sharp point at the other, and resembled a horseshoe nail in appearance. Perkins is reputed to have made the tractors at his home in a small furnace concealed in the wall of his house, and sold them for twenty-five dollars a pair in the United States, and for five guineas a pair in England.

Up to this time Perkins enjoyed a successful practice in Plainfield and also a growing reputation among his fellow practitioners. He was Chairman of the Windham County Medical Association in 1795, and at that time was elected a delegate to the meeting of the Connecticut Medical Society. The report of his discovery which he presented before this society was received "by some with doubt and caution and by others even with contempt." The consensus of opinion, as expressed by the members present, was that the effect of the application of the tractors was nothing more than a revival of animal magnetism, and he was requested to make further reports at the next meeting of the society.

"On February 19, 1796, he took out a patent for the tractors, thus receiving the exclusive right of making, constructing, using and vending to others to be used his pointed metallic instruments for himself, his heirs, administrators and assigns for fourteen years." (Steiner)

Having received his patent, Perkins sought to strengthen his position before the public. Accordingly he started out on a proselyting campaign. In Philadelphia he was received with great enthusiasm. The hospitals and infirmaries opened their doors to him, and "The Board of Managers of the Almshouse were so impressed that they purchased the patent right for the Tractors for Philadelphia." (Packard) The visit to Philadelphia was so timed that he was there while Congress was in session; and congressmen, then as now, were easily duped. Even the President of the United States, George Washington, purchased a set for use in his own

family. The Chief Justice of the United States, the Honorable Oliver Ellsworth, was convinced of their value and he not only purchased a set, but he also gave Perkins the following letter of introduction to John Marshall, who later succeeded him as Chief Justice.

Philadelphia, March 7, 1797.

Dear Sir.

The gentleman who will deliver this letter is Dr. Perkins of Connecticut, a respectable Physician, and Inventor of the Metallic Tractors, for the relief of pain. Strange as his hypothesis may be, experiments give it countenance. In some cases the effects wrought are not easily ascribed to imagination, great and delusive as its power. Should there be cases favorable for experiments in your vicinity, he would be ready to operate; and that in the presence of persons most competent to detect a fallacy, if there be one; or on the other hand, to extend the improvement, if in fact, a new principle be discovered. With great respect, I am, Sir, yours, &c.

Oliver Ellsworth.

Although Perkins was able to convince many of the high officials of the nation, and the public in general, of the efficacy of the tractors, he failed to convince the members of the Connecticut Medical Society. At the meeting of the Society in May, 1796, the following vote was passed.

VOTED, It having been represented to the Society, that one of their members had gleaned up from the miserable remains of animal magnetism, a practice of stroking with metallic Instruments, the pained parts of human bodies, giving out that such strokings will radically cure the most obstinate pain to which our frame is incident, causing false reports to be propagated of the effects of such strokings, especially where they have been performed on some public occasions, and on men of distinction; also that an excursion has been made abroad and a patent obtained from under the authority of the United States, to aid such delusive quackery; that under such auspices as membership of this Society, and the patent above mentioned, the delusion is progressing to the southward, which may occasion disgrace to the Society and mischief abroad; wherefore this Society announce to the public, that they consider all such practices as barefaced imposition, disgraceful to the faculty, and delusive to the ignorant; and they further direct their Secretary to cite any member of this Society, practising as above, before them, at their next meeting, to answer for his conduct, and render reasons why he should not be expelled from the Society, for such disgraceful practices.

At the May meeting, 1797, of the Connecticut Medical Society he was formally expelled from the Society by the following vote:

Whereas, Doctor Elisha Perkins, a member of this Society, having obtained a patent from under the authority of the United States, for the exclusive privilege of using and vending certain pointed metallic Instruments, pretending that they were the invention of his own; and also, that they possess inherent powers of curing many diseases, which is contrary to rules and regulations adopted by this Society, interdicting their members the use of Nostrums. Therefore,

VOTED, That the said Elisha Perkins be expelled from the Medical Society of the State of Connecticut.

Waterson quotes the following extract from a letter written by a Dr. Benjamin Parker; date and place not given:

All about Perkinism is perfectly true. I lived in those times. A gentleman in Virginia sold a plantation and took the pay for it in tractors. Nothing was more common than to sell horses and carriages to buy them. But the worst of it was, yellow fever was raging in New York and Perkins thought he could cure the fever with the tractors and fell a victim to the fever himself.

The last statement in Parker's letter is not correct. During the latter part of the eighteenth century yellow fever raged quite extensively in the seaboard cities of the United States. Perkins entertained the idea that powerful antiseptics had not been given a sufficient trial. He had previously given in cases of dysentery, with good effects, "a preparation of common vinegar, saturated with muriate of soda, diluted with three-fourths its quantity of hot water, and administered warm." He tried out the remedy at New London, Connecticut, and at Boston, Massachusetts, in 1798. In both places the fever was subsiding and no definite results could be obtained. In the summer of 1799, however, the fever raged in New York and he left his own practice and went to New York. "He notified in the public papers his willingness to visit in any part of the city all, indiscriminately, who should apply." He was overwhelmed with business and after four weeks of strenuous work he was stricken with the fever on September 2, and died September 6, 1799, aged fifty-nine years.

In 1796 Elisha Perkins published at Newburyport a pamphlet with the title *Certificates of the Efficacy of Doctor Perkins' Patent Metallic Instruments*. In this list was included the names of Doctor Nathan Smith and Doctor Thomas Hubbard; both of whom held, at a later date, a professorship in the Yale Medical School.

In 1795 Perkins sent his son, Benjamin Douglas Perkins, a Yale graduate in the class of 1794, to England as his representative to present the claims of the healing power of the tractors. He soon established himself in the old home of John Hunter, 18 Leicester Square and, as is the case with most quacks, quickly built up a thriving business. During the morning hours and until three in the afternoon he received patients and acted as salesman for the tractors; the remainder of the day he attended patients at their own homes.

In 1798 there was published at London a book with the following lengthy title: *The Influence of Metallic Tractors on the Human Body in Removing Various Painful Inflammatory Diseases, Such as Rheumatism, Pleurisy, Some Gouty Affections, etc., Lately Discovered by Dr. Perkins of North America and Demonstrated in a Series of Experiments and Observations by Professors Meigs, Woodward, Rogers, etc., by Which the Importance of the Discovery Is Fully Ascertained, and a New Field of Inquiry Opened in the Modern Sciences of Galvanism or Animal Electricity. By Benjamin Douglas Perkins, A.M., Son of the Discoverer*. The price of the tractors was given as five guineas, a "trifling amount when the cost of medical attendance was taken into consideration."

Oliver Wendell Holmes, commenting on this saving cost of medical attendance, quotes the following opinion of a Dr. Fuller, writing in England, himself a believer in Perkinism:

It must be an *extraordinary* exertion of virtue and humanity for a medical man, whose livelihood depends either on the sale of drugs, or on receiving a guinea for writing a prescription, which must relate to those drugs, to say to his patient, "You had better purchase a set of Tractors to keep in your family; they will cure you without the expense of my attendance, or the danger of the common medical practice." For very obvious reasons medical men must *never* be expected to recommend the use of Perkinism. The Tractors must trust for their patronage to the enlightened and philanthropic out of the profession, or to medical men retired from practice, and who know of no other *interest* than the luxury of relieving the distressed. And I do not despair of seeing the day when but very few of this description as well as private families will be without them.

Among the supporters of the tractors mentioned by Benjamin Douglas Perkins were fellow members of the Windham County Medical Association, of which his father had been president, and three doctors from other states, two of them occupying prominent positions in the medical profession; they were Dr. John Vaughn of Wilmington, Delaware, a corresponding member of the Philadelphia Academy of Medicine, honorary member of the Medical Society of Philadelphia and of the chief medical and philosophical societies of Delaware, and Dr. James Tilton, president of the Medical Society of the State of Delaware, and author of *Observations on Military Hospitals*, a work of permanent value. The latter wrote, "Instead of involving Dr. Perkins in the disgrace of Mesmer, I apprehend we ought to contrast the honest man with the rogue; for without art or affectation Dr. Perkins barely discloses useful facts, by means the most simple and easy."

Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut, under date of November 2, 1797, gave Benjamin Douglas Perkins a letter of introduction to his brother, the Honorable John Trumbull, one of the Commissioners for the settlement of British claims, in which he says among other things, "The *modus operandi* is, at present, beyond our explanation; but the effect produced in many, I may say, a great variety of instances, is very surprizing."

Levi Hart, a Fellow and Trustee to the University of New Haven (Yale) wrote his friend, the Reverend Dr. John Erskine of Edinburgh, indorsing the "efficacy of the Metallic Tractors for the removal of various disorders of the Human Body." Josiah Meigs, professor of natural philosophy at Yale, after telling of the successful use of the tractors on his son, wrote "I have used the tractors with success in several other cases and although, like Naaman, the Assyrian, I cannot tell why the waters of Jordan should be better than Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, yet since *experience* has proved them so, no reasoning can change the opinion." Not all doctors of divinity were in accord in regard to the efficiency of the tractors; for William Allen, D.D., in his *Biographical Dictionary*, says, "Having had myself for a great many years a pair of them, if they have ever relieved pain, I have found them also useful in picking walnuts."

In 1799 a second edition of the above-mentioned book appeared, and there also appeared another book with the long title, *Experiments With the Metallic Tractors in Rheumatic and Gouty Affections, Inflammations and Various Topical Diseases, Published*

*by Surgeons Herholdt and Rafn of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Copenhagen; Translated Into German by Professor Tode, Physician to His Danish Majesty, Thence to the English Language by Mr. Charles Kumpfmüller; Also Reports of About One Hundred and Fifty Cases in England, Demonstrating the Efficacy of the Metallic Practice in a Variety of Complaints, Both Upon the Human Body and on Horses, etc., by Medical and Other Respectable Characters. Edited by Benjamin Douglas Perkins, A.M., of Leicester Square, London, Son of the Discoverer.* It is interesting to trace the invasion of Denmark by the tractors. Some time prior to 1798 (I have not been able to find the exact date) the wife of Major Oxholm, who had been in the diplomatic service of Denmark in the United States, carried a pair of the tractors with her on her return home. She was an enthusiastic believer in their efficacy; and, as she occupied an influential position in Danish society, society quickly "fell for the tractors." Steiner says: "A friend, Frederic Snider, of one of the Danish authors, Herholdt, hearing of the tractors, received them from her and furnished Herholdt with them." A committee of physicians and surgeons who investigated the tractors reported favorably, and their findings form the first part of the above-mentioned book. The second part is made up of English cases ranging from toothache through rheumatism, gout, erysipelas, and St. Vitus dance, to lockjaw. Walsh says: "Why they [the Danes] were fated to be the victims of Dr. Perkins' tractors and Dr. Cook's discovery of the North Pole at a century interval is not clear, but the facts are interesting."

Not all cases were successful as the following case narrated by Holmes proves.

A certain lady had the misfortune to have a spot as big as a silver penny at the corner of her eye, caused by a bruise, or some such injury. Another lady, who was a friend of hers, and a strong believer in Perkinism, was very anxious to try the effects of tractoration upon this unfortunate blemish. The patient consented; the lady "produced the instruments, and, after drawing them four or five times over the spot, declared that it changed to a paler color, and on repeating the use of them a few minutes longer, that it had almost vanished, and was scarcely visible, and departed in high triumph at her success." The lady who underwent the operation assured the narrator "that she looked in the glass immediately after, and that not the least visible alteration had taken place."

The third part of the book describes the treatment of animals with the tractors. They seem to have been more successful on



horses than on cows and sheep. This was due, especially in the case of sheep, to their fleece, which was supplied with an oily fluid that prevented their successful application.

In 1800 Perkins published *The Efficacy of Perkins's Patent Metallic Tractors, in Topical Diseases on the Human Body and on Animals, exemplified by 250 cases, from some of the first literary characters in Europe and America*; it is termed by Perkins the book in "Marble Cover."

In 1801 a fourth volume was published by Perkins which had the following title: *Cases of Successful Practice with Perkins' Metallic Tractors Communicated Since January, 1800, the Date of the Former Publication by Many Scientific Characters, to which are Prefixed Remarks in Exposition of the Artifices of Interest and Prejudice to Prevent the Adoption of the Metallic Practice*. This is referred to by Perkins as the book in "Yellow Cover."

After the death of his father, Benjamin Douglas Perkins took out an English patent and, according to the specifications of the patent office, disclosed, as required, the composition of the tractors. This will be given later.

The success of the tractors in London was phenomenal, and led in 1803 to the founding of the Perkinian Institute in Frith Street, Soho; an institution founded by public subscriptions for the treatment of the poor. The Right Honorable Lord Rivers was President, and Governor Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin, was one of the vice-presidents. The institution is said to have had a better endowment than any hospital in London at that time. The opening of the institution was celebrated by a public dinner at the Crown and Anchor, July 15, 1803, at which a poem was read extolling the virtues of the metallic tractor. The poem is long and I will quote from different portions.

Not Newton's self could look all nature through,  
His, though a wide, was still a partial view.  
Experience teaches, from *effects* alone,  
The works of Deity in *part* are known.

See *Pointed Metals*, blest with power t'appease,  
The ruthless rage of merciless disease,  
O'er the frail part a subtil fluid pour,  
Drench'd with invisible Galvanic shower,  
Till the arthritic, staff, and "crutch forego,  
And leap exulting like the bounding roe!"

It is quite evident that neither the poet nor others were able to explain *how* the tractors produced their wonderful effect; for:

What, though the *Causes* may not be explain'd,  
Since these *Effects* are duly ascertain'd,  
Let not self-interest, prejudice, or pride,  
Induce mankind to set the means aside:  
Means, which, though simple, are by Heaven design'd,  
T'alleviate the woes of human kind;

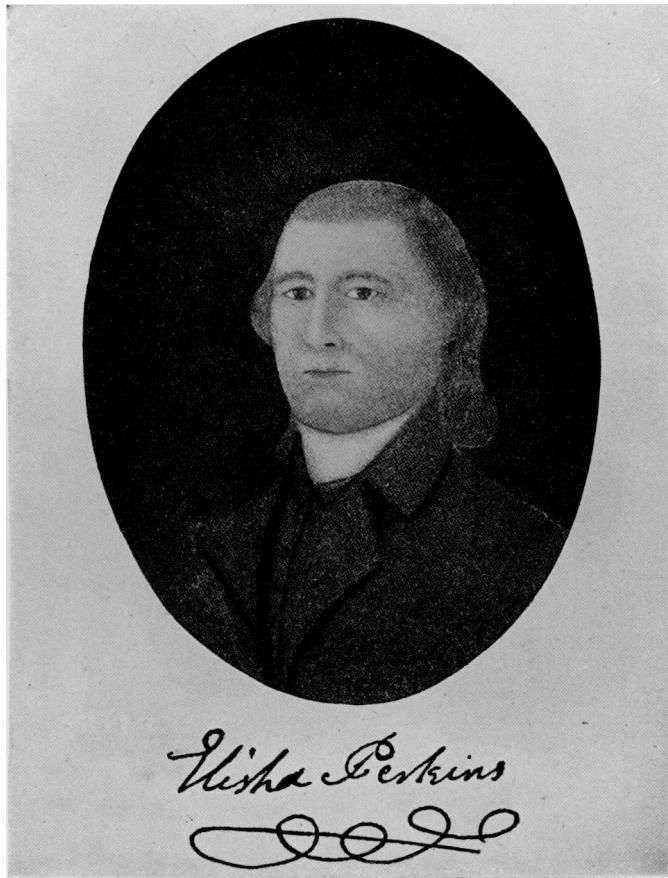
Life's darkest scenes with radiant light to cheer,  
Wipe from the cheek of agony the tear.  
"Blest be His Memory, who, in happy hour,  
Gave to humanity this wond'rous power."

In the meantime the medical profession, strongly against the employment of the tractors, claimed that their so-called "cures" were brought about through the imagination. Dr. John Haygarth of Bath made a number of experiments upon patients suffering with various complaints, using tractors made out of a variety of substances and, as the patient thought he was using genuine tractors, was able to obtain—strange to relate—equally wonderful effects with wooden tractors. According to Pettigrew, "similar experiments with wood, slate pencils, tobacco pipes, etc., were made at the Bristol Infirmary with the same results," demonstrating quite conclusively the influence of imagination on the body. Dr. Alderson employed sham tractors made of wood, and produced such effects upon five patients that they returned solemn thanks in church for their cure.

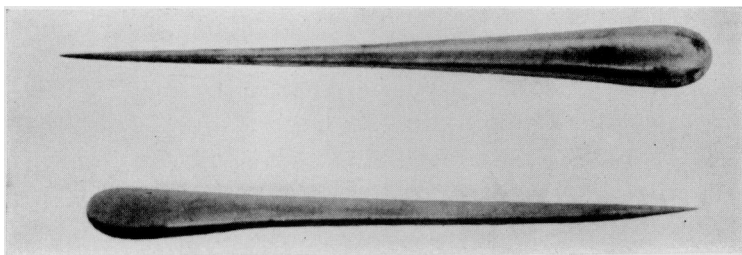
Haygarth's directions for the repetition of his experiments are as follows: "If any person would repeat the experiment with *wooden* tractors, it should be done with due solemnity; during the process the wonderful cures said to be performed by the tractors, should be particularly related. Without these *indispensable* aids, other trials will *not* prove so successful as those which are here reported."

As an improvement on the directions of Haygarth, a friend suggested that the incantation at the head of this paper should be repeated during the application of the tractors.

Various caricatures were issued showing the wonderful effects of Perkins Tractors. One by Gillroy has received special notice by Packard and by Steiner. In this the operator is treating the much enlarged and red nose of a confirmed tippler. That the patient has



ELISHA PERKINS (1741-1799)



The Tractors. Photograph of a pair in the Library of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland.



no intention of foregoing his favorite beverage is shown by the presence of his bottle of brandy, lemon, sugar, and hot water on an adjoining table. In the caricature here presented a woman and her three nieces are shown. The aunt evidently had a vicious tongue which did not fail to wag in many directions; for, standing well out of range, the operator is applying the tractors to the tongue of the aunt, who, for safety, is firmly tied in her chair. As the result there is discharged from the protruded tongue, in radiating streams, half-hints, malignancy, detractions, scandal, envy, hypocrisy, and insinuations. The three nieces are horrified, and the first exclaims, "Good Heavens! could you suppose Aunt had such an envenomed tongue?" The second replies, "Oh yes, my dear, very common are such in our town. If this good man cures all such Tongues he will deserve a Statue." The third very aptly exclaims, "Yes, and all of our young friends, I am sure, will contribute liberally." Sleeping quietly in a chair is a cat, significant of the term often applied to such characters as the aunt, "Old Cat!" Depicted on a screen in back of the aunt is a globe on which there is a rude outline of the world, which bears the legend "Observe the end," and as the stream of half-hints strikes it, it bursts into flames. Quietly observing the whole procedure is a parrot perched on the frame of the screen. If such treatment of tongues owned by all "Old Cats" of our day could only succeed, tractors would be in great demand in every town.

In 1802 Perkins published a fifth volume which I do not find mentioned by authors. My copy was given me some years since by Dr. Howard A. Kelly of Baltimore. It, like the preceding volumes, has a long title: *New Cases of Practice with Perkins's Patent Metallic Tractors, on the Human Body and on Animals; but Especially on Infants and Horses; chiefly from the Clerical and Medical Profession: with a Confutation of Every Attack upon the Metallic Practice.* This book contains an account of cases treated from the time the previous one was issued in 1801 up to March, 1802.

The history of my copy is interesting. As already stated, it was given me by Dr. Kelly and must have, as will appear later, been read by Davina Waterson; for she quotes a note which appears on one of the blank pages of the book. The title page of the book, which formerly belonged to General (Robert) Melville (who held various positions under the British Government, and invented a naval gun in 1759), bears his autograph, "General Melville, Lon-

don, 24 February 1803." The following note is found on the first of the blank pages at the end of the volume, in the handwriting of General Melville, and is the one quoted by Waterson.

Brewer Street  
24 Feby. 1803

J. D. went this morning to the several offices in Chancery Lane, where *Patents* are recorded, and in *that* called the *Rolls Chapel office*, he found the Record of the Patent granted on the 10th March in the 38th of Geo. 3d to Mr. Benjamin Douglas *Perkins*, from N. America: in the Specifications of which Mr. P. says that the object of his Patent is an application of what is called *Galvanism*: and that his *Tractors* (in consequence of the effect observed to be produced on human and other animal bodies by certain metals) are composed of *Copper, Zinc, and a little Gold*: and of *Iron* united with *a very little Silver or Platina*.

The italics and punctuations are those of General Melville.

We have thus, in the abstract given by General Melville, the object and composition of the Tractors as set forth by Benjamin Douglas Perkins at the time he applied for his patent at London. This gives a different composition to the Tractors than that of rods of brass and iron—the usual statement.

At the end of the book the table of contents of two preceding publications known respectively as the one in "Marble Cover," and the one in "Yellow Cover," is given. It is not surprising to find that many of the letters of commendation are from the clergy. Lord Rivers, who presided over the Perkinian Institution at London, apparently used the Tractors on his horses, for he wrote under date of May 25, 1801, to the patentee desiring to purchase an additional set of the Tractors "which he constantly leaves with his groom; they having been of the greatest use in his stables."

While artists did not fail to caricature Perkins and his tractors, poets also took advantage of the situation.

In his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Byron has the following lines:

What varied wonders tempt us as they pass!  
The Cow-pox, *Tractors*, Galvanism, Gas,  
In turns appear to make the vulgar stare,  
Till the swoll'n bubble bursts—and all is air.

In the following couplet from a popular ballad the Tractors are also alluded to:

Arm'd with twin skewers see Perkins by main force,  
 Drag the foul fiend from Christian and from Horse.

In 1803, Thomas Green Fessenden of Walpole, New Hampshire, a graduate in 1796 from Dartmouth College, who was in London at that time, was induced by Perkins to write a poem about the tractors. This is a sarcastic poem in four cantos in which it is sometimes stated the tractors and their advocates are held up to public ridicule. The opposite is, however, true—it is a defense of Perkinism and a sarcastic attack on the medical faculty. Some time since I obtained a copy of the first American edition, the title of which is as follows:

*Terrible Tractorations!! A Poetical Petition against Galvanising Trumpery, and the Perkinistic Institution. In Four Cantos. Most Respectfully Addressed to The Royal College of Physicians, by Christopher Caustic, M.D., LL.D., ASS. Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Aberdeen, and Honorary Member of no Less than Nineteen Very Learned Societies, New York, 1804.*

I do not know the complete history of the previous ownership of the book; for the book-plate had been destroyed evidently by moistening it and then rubbing it with the thumb or fingers—a most aggravating procedure. The title page, however, bears the name of Asa Stanley, a person of whom I can find no record. One cannot spend a more enjoyable evening than by a perusal of this interesting book. A few abstracts are taken at random.

In Canto I Caustic's wonderful skill is extolled.

I had a curious little lancet,  
 Your worships could not help but fancy it,  
 By which I show'd, with skill surprising,  
 The whole art of *Flea*-botamising!

And with it oft inoculated  
 (At which friend Jenner'll be elated)  
 Flies, fleas, and gnats, with cow-pox matter,  
 And not one *soul* took small-pox a'ter.

*Canto I, p. 19.*

But I, in spite of my renown,  
 Alas! am harrass'd, hunted down;  
 Completely damn'd, the simple fact is,  
 By *Perkins's Metallic Practice*.

Our should-be wise and learn'd societies  
 Are guilty of great improprieties,  
 In treating me in manner scandalous,  
 As if I were a very Vandal; thus

Determin'd, as I have no doubt,  
 My sun of genius to put out,  
 Which, once extinct, they think that so 'tis  
 Their glow-worm lights may claim some notice.

*Canto I*, pp. 54-55.

In the second canto Caustic directly addresses the Royal College of Physicians.

If you my wrongs should not redress,  
 We all must be in one sad mess!

The credit of our craft is waning,  
 Then rouse at this my sad complaining;  
 For, though my fate now seem the rougher,  
 Still *you* as well as *I* must suffer.

Behold! A rising Institution,  
 To spread Perkinean delusion;  
 Supported by a set of sturdy men,  
 Dukes, quakers, doctors, lords, and clergymen!

Unblushed at the knavish trick,  
 I fear these fellows soon will kick  
 (A thing of all things most uncivil)  
 One half our physic to the d-v-l!

*Canto II*, pp. 58-59.

In Canto III Caustic

Sends abroad a Proclamation  
 Against Perkinean conjuration.



Say to the public all you can say,  
Of magic spells, and necromancy;  
That Perkins and his crew are wizards,  
Conceal'd in sanctimonious vizards.

Say to the public all you can say,  
Of wonder-working power of fancy:  
Tell what *imagination's* force is  
In crows and infants, dogs and horses.

*Canto III, p. 94.*

What though they say, why to be sure,  
If we by Fancy's aid can *cure*;  
Then why not use Imagination,  
A *cheap* and *simple* operation?

That learn'd physicians pine with hunger,  
The while a spruce young patent-monger  
Contrives to wheedle simple ninnies,  
And *tractorise* away *our* guineas.

*Canto III, pp. 101, 103.*

Canto IV contains in a foot-note, apropos of a reference to Dr. Lettsom, an amusing dialogue between "a renowned Physician, of the name of Dr. LEATHERHEAD, and a gentleman, who was no physician at all, whom I shall call Mr. ROWLAND." I abstract the following:

Mr. R. How has Perkins become possessed of the cases he has published?

Dr. L. Oh! that I can tell thee, very easily, friend R. *Has thee* never heard of Dr. Godbold?

Mr. R. Certainly.

Dr. L. Well, as he could neither read nor write, he kept two men in constant employ, one to write his cases, and one to swear to them.

The old type of quack began to fade out of the picture toward the close of the eighteenth century and a new type, that of the quack-medicine vender, took his place. Among the latter Godbold's "Vegetable Balsam" occupied a prominent place. It is said Godbold made \$50,000 a year from its sale. He is described as "a sociable, hospitable fellow, but illiterate and vulgar in conversation."

The fourth canto is mainly a challenge to the Royal College.

Come on! Begin the grand attack  
With aloes, squills, and ipecac;  
And then with glyster-pipe and squirt-gun,  
There will be monstrous deal of hurt done!

*Canto IV*, p. 170.

See host to host and man to man set!  
A Tractor each, and each a Lancet!  
Each meets his foe, so fierce attacks him!  
That sure some God or Demon backs him!

*Canto IV*, p. 173.

But the adherents of Perkins are not to be exterminated, for:

These are the methods of "dead doing,"  
By which we'll work the wizard's ruin;  
And when with Satan all such trash is,  
We'll rise, like Phoenix, on its ashes.

*Canto IV*, p. 185.

Now, Sirs, consent to my Petition,  
And send these varlets to perdition,  
So for your weal and welfare, *post hic*,  
Will ever pray —

CHRISTOPHER CAUSTIC.

*Canto IV*, p. 186.

Perkins did not remain in England to see the end of the Institution, but returned to America in 1803, "while the going was good," as Steiner puts it, with some \$50,000 profit, and entered the book publishing and selling business in New York. He had become a Quaker before leaving England, and that may have accounted for his shrewd move in returning to this country when he did. He died in New York, October 13, 1810, aged 37 years.

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